

Call for Applications Notice

MOSTMICRO-ITQB Exploratory Projects

A call is open for exploratory projects in the core areas of the Unit with the goal of obtaining preliminary results to support subsequent funding applications. Projects should develop novel research ideas, which have not yet secured funding, contributing to the understanding of biological processes at the molecular, structural, cellular or population levels, with a focus on microbes important for human health, biotechnology, and the environment.

Objective:

The main objective of this call is to support future funding applications by enabling laboratories to develop novel research ideas, acquire preliminary results and contribute to the growth of both the individual labs and the Unit as a whole.

Funding:

A total of five projects will be funded with 20 000€/project for one year.

Project Starting Date:

The projects should start in 2026.

Application:

Application proposals must be submitted by a PhD Holder belonging to a MOSTMICRO-ITQB Lab (the list of eligible MOSTMICRO-ITQB Labs is included in the Regulations document). If this person is not the Lab Head and the Lab Head is not part of the Research Team, a support letter from the Lab Head should accompany the submission.

Collaborations with other ITQB NOVA laboratories are allowed, but only one Lab leads the application.

Each Lab can only submit one application as lead Lab. As collaborator Lab, there are no restrictions to the number of applications it can participate.

Application Deadline:

The application must be submitted by **June 8th, 2026**.

Application submission:

The application must be sent by email, as a PDF file, to soraia.chocho@itqb.unl.pt, and should consist of up to **five A4 pages** (cover not included), including references and figures (Please use Times New Roman, 12 pt; margins of at least 1 cm all around; single space or larger.). The application file should include the following sections:

- Proposal title, name of the main proponent, and identification of the lead Lab submitting the application
- Summary of the research proposal
- State of the art
- List of team members
- Work plan, with a description of individual tasks, if relevant
- Explanation about the alignment of the proposed research with the goals of the MOSTMICRO-ITQB unit, highlighting the added value for the unit
- Explanation of how the proposed research will support future funding applications, as well as the identification of relevant funding calls to be targeted within the next two years.
- Budget
- Report of present Lab(s) funding and areas of research funded.
- References and figures

Selection procedures and evaluation criteria:

The proposals will be evaluated by the MOSTMICRO-ITQB Scientific Advisory Board Members taking into consideration the following evaluation criteria:

- 1. Scientific merit of the project (40%)**
Quality, originality/novelty, and scientific relevance of the proposed research.
- 2. Feasibility of the project and capacity of the research team (20%)**
Feasibility of the proposed plan, adequacy of methodologies, and the team's expertise to successfully execute the project.
- 3. Added value for the Research Unit and potential to attract future external funding (30%)**
Expected contribution to the Unit's strategic goals and the project's potential to strengthen future competitive funding applications.
- 4. Funding needs and justification (10%)**
Alignment between the laboratory's current funding status and the request; clarity of the applicant's motivation, and expected impact of the requested funds.

The final classification score will be expressed on a scale from 0 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) points.

Composition of the Scientific Advisory Board:

Name	Institution	Country
Professor Gunnar von Heijne	Stockholm University Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics	Sweden
Professor Luís Serrano	Centre for Genomic Regulation (CRGR), Barcelona	Spain
Professor Diethard Mattanovich	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna	Austria
Professor Christa Schleper	University of Vienna, Faculty of Life Sciences, Vienna	Austria

Notification of results:

All applicants will be informed of the final decision by email.

For further information, please contact: soraia.chocho@itqb.unl.pt